

NAVY HISTORY DIVISION

CAPTAIN DAVID S. EDWARDS, Jr.
UNITED STATES NAVY

David Shelton Edwards, Jr., was born in Piedmont, California, on July 24, 1911, son of David S. and Ethel Elizabeth (Martin) Edwards. He grew up on the shores of San Francisco Bay and the Pacific, and after graduation from Piedmont High School went to sea as a deck boy on the SS VENTURA, of the Matson Line, at the age of 16 in the summer of 1928. He attended Leland Stanford University (1928-1929) prior to entering the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from California, on June 30, 1930. He was graduated and commissioned Ensign on May 31, 1934, and subsequently advanced in rank to that of Captain, to date from May 1, 1953.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in May 1934, he served continuously at sea until May 1946, three days short of twelve years. Reporting first to the USS PORTLAND, a cruiser of the Pacific Fleet, he served for two years as a junior officer in the Antiaircraft Division and F. Division. From May 1936 to June 1937 he was Second Division Officer of the USS WHITNEY, a destroyer tender operating from San Diego, California. He then served in the destroyer SANDS, first as Assistant First Lieutenant and Assistant Engineer, later as First Lieutenant, and during her decommissioning at San Diego, as Acting Executive Officer.

From September 1938 to October 1939 he was Communications Officer, with various collateral duties, on board the USS MAHAN, and for fourteen months thereafter served in the USS BAILEY on Neutrality Patrol out of Galveston, Texas. In the latter destroyer he had successive duty as First Lieutenant and Gunnery Officer, Engineering Officer, and Acting Executive Officer, completing destroyer duty in December 1940. During the two and one half years to follow, he was Third Division Officer, Main Battery Officer and Air Defense Officer on board the cruiser BOISE, which he joined in California. The BOISE operated first as a unit of Hawaiian Detachment; escorted a convoy to Manila, Philippine Islands, in November 1941; was operating in the Netherlands East Indies when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941; was heavily damaged in the Southwest Pacific area on October 11-12, 1942 at Cape Esperance.

He was awarded the Silver Star Medal "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Starboard 5-inch Battery Control Officer aboard the USS BOISE during action against enemy Japanese forces off Cape Esperance, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, on the night of October 11-12, 1942..." The citation states that he directed his battery "with superb efficiency picking up targets quickly and spotting correctly, despite the fact that his ship was under terrific fire..."

In May 1943 he joined the staff of Commander Cruiser Division 13 (Rear Admiral L. T. DuBose, later Rear Admiral M. L. Deyo), and served as Flag Secretary and Acting Chief of Staff throughout his assignment ending in April 1944. As such he participated in the following: Invasion of Sicily (June 1943); raids on Tarawa Island (September 1943 and Wake Island (October 1943); Bougainville Campaign (November 1943); Gilbert Islands operation (November-December,

1943); Marshall Islands operation (February 1944); Truk/Marianas raids (February to April 1944); Marianas campaign (June to August 1944); Bonins raids (June to August 1944); Palau campaign (September-October 1944) Philippines raids (September 1944); Surigao operations and Okinawa and Formosa raids (October 1944); Luzon raids (November-December 1944); Luzon, China and Formosa raids (January 1945); Iwo Jima assault and raids on Japan (February-March 1945); and the Okinawa Campaign (March-April 1945).

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct...as Flag Secretary and Planning and Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Cruiser Division THIRTEEN, during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Central and South Pacific War Areas from May 19, 1943 to November 1, 1944..." he was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V." The citation continues: "A capable administrator, Commander Edwards discharged his various duties with efficiency during a period of almost continuous operations against major Japanese controlled islands...(and) contributed materially to the success of his cruiser division and to the long-range effectiveness of our sustained drive against the Japanese..."

He was also awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," and following citation: "For heroic service as Senior Aide, Operations Officer and Flag Secretary to Commander Cruiser Division THIRTEEN, in action against enemy forces in the Mediterranean and in the North, South and the Central Pacific War Areas from May 1943 to March 1945. A skillful and courageous leader, (he) assisted in the preparation of the plans and direction of the successful deployment of the ships of the division for air strikes, observation reconnaissance and support bombardments against the enemy...(and) contributed immeasurably to the success of his division in the assault operations..."

He assumed command of the USS AULT (DE 698) in June 1945. Under his command that destroyer escort participated in THIRD Fleet operations against Japan during the period July 10 to August 15, 1945, and had occupation duties from August 1945 until January 1946. He brought her back to the United States (East Coast) and was detached in May 1946. During the year following, he was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (Operational Intelligence) where he prepared ONI publications, including OpIntel and POW Manuals. He attended the Artillery School at Fort Bliss (El Paso) Texas, the Joint Army-Navy Guided Missiles School, from July 1947 until June 1948, and in July assumed command of the USS HYMAN (DD 732), based first at Newport, Rhode Island, later New Orleans, Louisiana. Under his command the HYMAN cruised in the Western Atlantic Area and had one tour in the Mediterranean.

Duty as an instructor in Administration and Leadership on the staff of the U. S. Naval School (General Line), Newport, Rhode Island, from September 1949 to August 1950, preceded command, for a year of the USS DONNER (LSD 20). The DONNER, recommissioned at Charleston, South Carolina, on October 10, 1950, was assigned to the SIXTH Fleet on February 7, 1951 and under his command took part

in Operation "BLUEJAY" to Thule in August 1951, after which he was detached. During the next two years he served on the staff of Commander in Chief Atlantic, Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet, and Commander in Chief Western Atlantic, with duty in the Operations Division and as Assistant to the Fleet Operations Officer (for Operational Planning).

In August 1953 he reported to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, where he completed the ASSP Course in June 1954, and later served on the staff. He was Commander Destroyer Division 162 from July 1955, until September 1956, after which he had duty as Director of the Plans Division in the Office of Information, Navy Department. He remained there until July 1958 and now serves as Commanding Officer of the TOLOVANA (AO-64).

In addition to the Silver Star Medal; Legion of Merit with Combat "V," and the Bronze Star Medal with "V," Captain Edwards has the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three silver and one bronze star (Sixteen operations); European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three stars; American Campaign Medal; World War II Victory Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal, Asia Clasp; National Defense Service Medal; and the Philippine Defense, Liberation, and Independence Ribbons.

His hobbies are tennis, golf, and painting.

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Biographies Branch
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